

## **Student Representation Roadmap at UWS**

**\*Please note this is a temporary roadmap for T1 2023, providing a contingency plan due to the ongoing impacts of the cyber-attack\***

### **Introduction**

At UWS the team of Student Reps are an important part of ensuring that we are here for our students. UWS and Students' Union staff and students work together to ensure that representative systems empower students, encourage engagement, and make sure the student voice is heard. A strong Student Representation system ensures student engagement in academic governance as required by the higher education code of governance, and empowers students to be partners in their own learning.

This document provides practical guidance and agreement defining the roles of all partners in Student Representation at UWS.

The three key principals of student representation at UWS are:

- Partnership – Staff and students working together to enhance the learning experience.
- Respect - Valuing and including all views and opinions.
- Communication - Open and honest conversations between staff and students.

### **Representation Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **- Course Reps**

Course reps talk directly to students studying on the same course as them. They gather and share feedback in Staff-Student Liaison Group meetings where they work together with staff to make improvements. They pass feedback to the divisional reps.

#### **- Divisional Reps**

Divisional Reps talk to course reps to see what's happening in their Division and keep School Officers informed. They attend divisional boards and gather feedback related to the whole division.

#### **- School Officers**

School Officers bridge the gap between Divisional Reps and the Sabbatical Officers. School Officers gather information from Divisional Reps, sit on School Boards, and keep students informed, and work with the Students' Union to improve life for UWS students within their schools.

#### **- Sabbatical Officers**

The Sabbatical Officers are students who are elected to serve the student body full time, paid, and for a year. They each have different roles and responsibilities. The President has oversight of all areas of activity and works alongside three Vice-Presidents with the following areas of responsibility: Education, Student Development, and Welfare and Wellbeing. Each year the priorities of the Sabbatical Officers will change depending on the manifesto pledges on which they were elected.

## Electing Reps

Usually UWS Students' Union runs formal elections for all student reps at UWS at two points in the year. Course reps and divisional reps are elected at the beginning of Term 1, and School Officers and Sabbatical Officers are elected in March to take up the role for the following academic year. **In T1 2023 Course Rep Elections will be held in class by academic staff, and the results communicated with the Students' Union via an online Teams form as agreed by the August meeting of the Representation Working Group.**

## Shared Responsibilities

The following table summarises the roles students, UWS staff and Students' Union staff in ensuring the Student Representation Systems at UWS run smoothly and effectively.

When	Task	Responsibility
August	Creating rep guidance and promotional materials for UWS staff and students	Students' Union: Student Representation Coordinators
August	Disseminating rep guidance and promotional materials to UWS staff	UWS: SED/SOM + Programme Leaders HLS – SED + Programme Leaders BCI – School Business Manager and SED Students' Union: Student Representation Coordinators
September and January - March	Promoting elections to students	UWS: Programme Leads + Lecturers UWS: SEDs + SOMs BCI + HLS – SED Students' Union: Student Representation Coordinators
September and throughout the year if positions are vacant	Administrating the Course Rep Elections	Programme Leaders
September	Communicating the election results via Microsoft forms	Programme Leaders supported by SEDs and SOMs HLS: Programme Leaders supported by SED
March	Administering the Officer Elections	Students' Union: Student Representation and Communications Team Leader
March	Communicating election results	Students' Union: Student Representation and Policy Coordinator

October onwards	Recruitment after formal online elections	UWS: Programme Leaders (Students' Union can support this)
Throughout the Year	Basic Rep Training	Students' Union: Student Representation and Training Coordinator
Throughout the Year	Additional Skills and Development Training for Reps	Students' Union: Student Representation and Training Coordinator
Throughout the Year	Staff Training	Students' Union: Student Representation and Training Coordinator
Throughout the Year	Scheduling Meetings (SSLGs, Divisional Boards, School Boards)	UWS: School based Professional Support Service (PSS) colleagues HLS SSLG – School Admin HLS Divisional Board – Division Coordinator HLS School Board – School Operational Manager  ESS SSLG – School Admin ESS Divisional Board – Divisional Coordinator ESS School Board – School Executive Assistant  BCI – SED, PLs, Professional Support Service  CEPS SSLG – School Admin/Division Coordinators CEPS Divisional Board – Division Coordinator CEPS School Board – Education and Quality Officer
Throughout the Year	Inviting Reps to meetings	UWS: As above, but: BCI SSLGs – PLs and PSS, SED to supply names to PSS administrators for divisional and school boards. HLS – SED to provide Rep details to School PSS colleagues for SSLGs, Divisional and School Boards
Throughout the Year	Taking minutes at meetings	UWS: As above
Throughout the Year	Circulating minutes	UWS: As above
Throughout the Year	Following up on actions	Student Reps UWS:

		SED/School Based PSS colleagues/Chair (BCI – SED and PLs) (HLS - SED and PLs)
Throughout the Year	Briefing Students	Capacity for this is not currently in place, but we believe it is a necessary part of a strong Student Rep System
Throughout the Year	Supporting Students During Meetings	UWS Staff
Throughout the Year	Chairing SSLGs	Student Reps with Staff Support
Throughout the Year	Gathering student feedback before meetings	Student Reps
Throughout the Year	Sharing student feedback with other reps and the Students' Union	Student Reps
Throughout the Year	Closing the feedback loop – informing students of meeting outcomes	Student Reps Students' Union: Sabbatical Officers UWS: Minutes posted on moodle/aula
Throughout the Year	Recording Rep Engagement	UWS and Students' Union Staff
Throughout the Year	Supporting reps who are not engaging	UWS and Students' Union Staff

## Details of Tasks

### Creating rep guidance and promotional materials for UWS staff and students

Each year rep guidance and promotional materials for UWS staff and students will be updated with dates for the upcoming year and information aimed at increasing staff and student awareness of and engagement with the student representation systems.

### Promoting elections to students

Students' Union: Via social media students will be encouraged to stand for election, and engage as voters.

UWS: Student facing staff will promote the elections to their cohorts, and information and links to the election will appear on my day.

### Administrating the Course Rep Elections

This should be undertaken in a core class with the majority of students in attendance, with PLs asking who would like to stand. If there are more students who want to become reps than rep positions then the PL should hold a vote. If there are not enough students interested to hold a vote, then the PL should ask for the students' approval to ensure that the new reps have a mandate from the cohort. The Students' Union can provide someone to come in to talk to the cohort and to help facilitate the recruitment on request.

[More details and support for electing reps can be found in the guidance document accessible here.](#)

### **Communicating the Course Rep Elections Results**

Initially the results should be communicated to the Students' Union, utilising the Microsoft Teams form linked in the guidance document. Cohorts should also be informed of who their rep is and encouraged to contact them.

### **Administrating the Officer Elections**

This is managed via the Students' Union's MSL systems which allows students to nominate themselves, vote online, and automatically shows students only the positions they are eligible to stand and vote for.

### **Communicating election results**

Elections results will be hosted on the Students' Union website, and students will be informed that reps have been elected and encouraged to look them up. Schools will also have access to a student rep database managed by the Students' Union.

### **Recruitment after formal online elections**

Recruiting after formal online elections should be managed by programme leaders.

### **Basic Rep Training**

Once elected, Course and Division Reps will be invited to engage with Course Rep Training by the Students' Union, this is developed by SPARQS and usually delivered by an Associate Trainer (recruited by SPARQS to deliver this training).

Rep Training is split into two parts:

Part 1 is a self-directed online learning module which highlights key models and practices for Reps to consider.

Part 2 is a live follow up session which reinforces the learning from the module and enables Reps to share experiences at an early stage.

This training is made available throughout the year.

### **Additional Skills and Development Training for Reps**

School Officer and Divisional Rep training is delivered by the Union and includes refresher activity from Initial Rep Training, discussion of their manifesto promises and low level analysis of sector and UWS surveys including NSS to highlight potential projects and campaigns.

Chair Training will be delivered to Reps who are responsible for chairing Student Staff Liaison Groups. This training can be delivered by the Union or UWS upon request by either Reps or Staff.

Additional networking and skills workshop sessions will also be offered throughout the year to support Reps continued development.

### **Staff Training**

To support staff in their role of supporting Student Representation, the Union can provide staff with development training to support their understanding of Representation, student engagement and Partnership working. This training has also been developed by SPARQS and can be delivered at any time upon request to individuals or groups of staff.

### **Scheduling Meetings**

In line with the Student Staff Liaison Group (SSLG) remit each school will appoint a member of staff to be responsible for SSLGs. The School Business Manager will also ensure appropriate administrative support is provided. Scheduling meetings, especially SSLGs, should take into account the timetables of both the students and staff who make up the group. Students should, where possible be given at least two weeks' notice of the meeting date. It is expected that Reps will have authorised absence from class to attend Rep activities including training and attend Student Staff meetings, although Reps are encouraged to ask for a change to meeting times where these are set at the same time of a scheduled class. If reps are undergoing placement activity, arrangements should be made to best accommodate Reps so they don't lose out on learning and are able to fulfil their role.

### **Inviting Reps**

When inviting reps to a meeting we recommend that invites are sent by a staff member known to the student, and that the purpose of the meeting, what the student should do in advance of the meeting, and what the student should do if they are unable to attend should be stated clearly. Students should be invited to meetings with a minimum of two weeks notice. Students are full members of the committees and should be provided with all paperwork, and should have the opportunity to input into the agenda. Students should be made aware of any items on the agenda that are sensitive or confidential, a different approach may be used for making these papers available. Where possible, papers should be circulated one week before the meeting. Students who are unable to attend must be given the opportunity to feed in any comments for consideration at the meeting.

### **Circulating Minutes**

When minutes are circulated we recommend that next steps and any actions are stated clearly in the body of the email, as well as the timings of the next meeting. Minutes should be circulated to members, and minutes of SSLGs should also be circulated to the students on the programme as well as the student reps.

### **Following up on actions**

Student reps and staff may both take actions away from meetings. Should Reps be given any action points from meetings, a nominated staff member should support the achievement of these. A record of the meeting, including any actions, will be circulated to all student representatives, allowing them to communicate the key outcomes to their fellow students using the agreed communication channels. We recommend that actions are clearly stated and agreed before being recorded in the minutes, and that during agenda setting for the next meeting, those with outstanding actions are contacted for an update.

### **Briefing Students**

Where staff bring specific items for discussion to SSLGs (e.g. a local policy change, changes to module assessment etc.) reps should be provided with briefings, otherwise SSLG meetings do not require briefings, as student feedback is the key agenda item.

The Representation Working Group believes that briefings would provide much needed support to our student reps at divisional and school level, and strengthen student voice at UWS but that currently there is not operational capacity to provide this. Our strong recommendation is that this is resourced as something that must happen. This could be in the form of a briefing paper or a meeting between Reps and a nominated staff member to discuss agenda items and provide an opportunity to ask questions.

### **Supporting Students During Meetings**

While attending meetings, staff are expected to encourage and actively seek out feedback that reps have gathered and ensure these are noted in the minutes. Staff should also be proactive in supporting students to engage with the content of meetings, and be mindful of sharing acronyms or background information that students may not know.

### **Chairing SSLGs**

The school will support the appointment of a student Chair and a co-chair will be appointed from the staff team. The Students' Union provides training for all student representatives to help them fulfil their role. Additional training for those students who are interested in chairing the SSLG can also be provided.

### **Gathering student feedback before meetings**

Reps will be able to speak with their cohorts and gather feedback before meetings. The Students' Union provide communications channels for the reps to be able to do this. Course reps will be able to contact their cohorts via the Students' Union website functions, and all reps and officers are able to contact each other via the Student Rep Teams group.

### **Sharing Student feedback with other reps and the Students' Union**

Reps are connected with other reps and the Students' Union via the Student Rep Teams page, and will be encouraged by Student Union staff and Sabbatical officers to share feedback with each other regularly.

## **Closing the feedback loop – informing students of meeting outcomes**

In order to close the feedback loop, schools should keep student reps up to date with the steps being taken to address SSLG actions. If schools decide not to progress an action the reason for this decision should be made clear to the student reps.

## **Recording Rep Engagement**

Students' Union Staff will record Rep attendance at training, student council, and engagement with our online forums. UWS Staff should record engagement with meetings, which may include sending comments in the event that attendance is not possible, as well as attendance at meetings.

## **Supporting Reps who are not engaging**

A student, student rep, or staff member may raise a concern with the Students' Union if they believe a rep is not fulfilling their role in representing students. In the first instance, UWS and Union Staff will contact the rep and offer support and pastoral care to ensure that they are okay, and work with the rep to build their confidence to engage. This may include buddying with a more experienced rep, gaining extra training, or meeting with staff to answer any questions they may have. If a rep does not respond to communications or speak with any staff, then an additional rep position may be opened for that course to ensure representation continues.

# **Works in Progress**

## **PGR Students**

Representation systems specifically for PGR Students were developed in partnership between the Students' Union, Doctoral College, and staff members within schools in 2022, resulting in a PGR specific election being held in T3 of that year. Unfortunately, this had low uptake amongst PGR students and is due a review.

In September 2023 elections will be held in partnership between the Students' Union and the Doctoral College to elect representatives for Senate, the Doctoral College Board, and REAC.

## **Alternatives to SSLGs**

There are some courses which may not have any students who wish to become student reps. If after the formal election period has run, academic staff have encouraged students to stand, and the Students' Union has been contacted for help, no Reps have come forward, staff should ensure that student views are being gathered. This may take the form of meetings open to all students, or other forms of eliciting feedback. Staff should make sure this is recorded to formalise this feedback mechanism and satisfy UWS quality assurance requirements.

## **Exchange Student Representation**



Initial conversations have begun between the Students' Union and staff who work closely with Erasmus and other exchange students, to ensure that the experience of those students is captured.

**Representation Annual Calendar.**

September – Course Rep Elections

October – Course Rep Training Round 1

November – Course Rep Training Round 2

November – Student Council 1

December – Student Council 2

January – Course Rep Training Round 3

January – Student Council 3

February – Student Council 4

March – Big Elections – Sabbatical Officers, School Officers, and Divisional Reps

June – Sabb and Lead Rep Training

July – Finalise mapping for rep positions for next academic year

August – Set up online course rep elections